Second Annual Results 2007 - 2008

First Nations Economic Partnerships Initiative

Alberta Aboriginal Relations

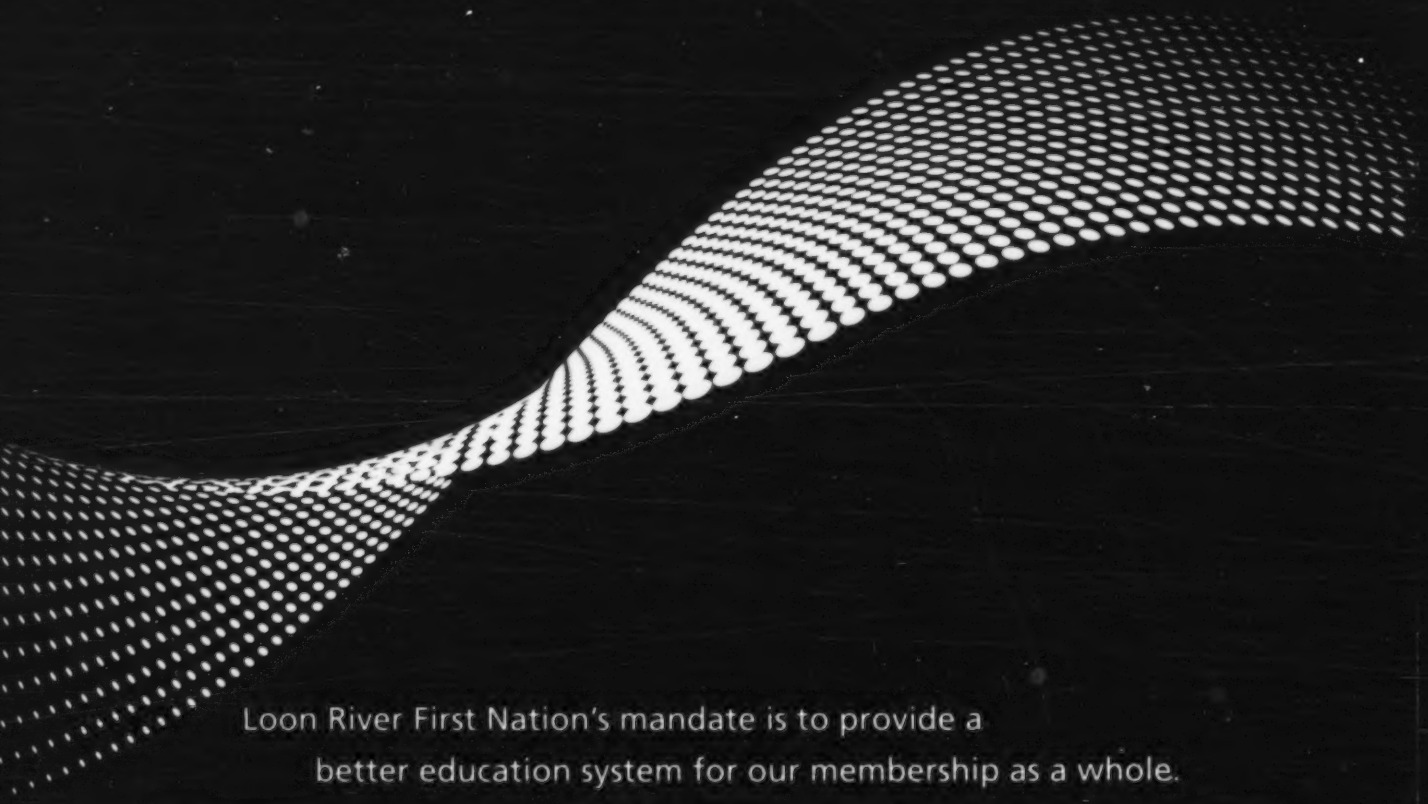
StrengtheningPartnerships **Building**Futures.

StrengtheningPartnerships **Building**Futures.

The Enoch Cree Nation is building for the future by creating an economy for generations to come. The SEI funding is providing the ECN with a

"hand-up" rather than a "hand-out"

Don Morin, Senior Manager – *Economic Development, Enoch Cree Nation.*



Loon River First Nation's mandate is to provide a better education system for our membership as a whole.

The partnership with IBM and Function Four Ltd. brings the tools and technology

that are needed in order to accomplish this goal.

Anne Auger, *Loon River First Nation*

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Message from the Minister of Aboriginal Relations

Welcome to the second annual report on the First Nations Economic Partnerships Initiative (FNEPI). This flagship program supports Alberta's Aboriginal Policy Framework and is the cornerstone of the Government of Alberta's commitment to strengthen Aboriginal participation in the economy.

FNEPI was launched in 2005 with input from Alberta First Nations and industry leaders and is delivered by Aboriginal Relations in collaboration with Alberta Employment and Immigration. The seven inter-related programs promote collaboration among First Nation communities and organizations, industry, governments and other partners.

I'm pleased to highlight three major areas of development in this past year of FNEPI's growth: a positive review of the program; a commitment to ongoing program funding; and continuing growth in the number of partnerships that are benefitting First Nations people and communities in Alberta.

Increasing partnerships is critical to enhancing First Nations participation in the Alberta economy. Since its inception, FNEPI has supported 109 partnerships involving 31 First Nations in Alberta, nine Tribal Councils/regional organizations and numerous industry stakeholders. With the participation of these First Nation communities and industry partners, a formal program review took place in fall 2007 identifying areas the already successful program could continue enhancing.

This demonstrated success has resulted in an ongoing funding commitment for FNEPI. The Government of Alberta now invests more than $8 million annually to encourage Aboriginal partnerships and strengthen economic capacity.

We invite you to read and celebrate the success stories profiled in this annual report. They range from entrepreneurial training to labour force development; tourism initiatives to technology partnerships; education and career enhancements to industry training. FNEPI is facilitating hands-on business advisory services, governance development and community development initiatives across the province.

I want to thank all the FNEPI partners for their ongoing spirit of collaboration. Our shared vision is strong, vibrant Aboriginal communities and people fully participating in the opportunities of a prosperous and diverse Alberta. We know that capacity building and economic development are the doorways to this future, and that FNEPI holds the key to unlocking those opportunities.

Gene Zwozdesky
Minister of Aboriginal Relations

Introduction

The First Nations Economic Partnerships Initiative (FNEPI) was developed in partnership with First Nations and industry. It is designed to increase First Nations participation in the economy by:

- Supporting the development of effective partnerships between First Nations, industry, government and other stakeholders.
- Strengthening First Nations economic capacity.
- Assisting in the development of a viable First Nations private sector.

This document presents FNEPI results for the 2007-08 fiscal year (April 1, 2007 to March 31, 2008). It includes a brief history and background as well as an overview of related programs and projects. This information is organized according to FNEPI's three main objectives:

1. **Partnership Development**: To support the development of sustainable partnerships between First Nations and industry, government and other stakeholders.
2. **Capacity Building**: To strengthen First Nations capacity to take advantage of current and future economic opportunities.
3. **Entrepreneurship Development & Support**[1]**:** To ensure Aboriginal people in Alberta have the opportunity to share in our province's prosperity by providing entrepreneurship development and support services.

This report includes profiles of program activity and the identification of promising practices that are emerging from FNEPI projects.

Strengthening First Nations Participation in the Economy

The current vision of Alberta Aboriginal Relations is *Strong and vibrant Aboriginal communities and people, fully participating in the opportunities of a prosperous and diverse Alberta.*

The current mission of Alberta Aboriginal Relations is to *Oversee the development and alignment of Government of Alberta legislation, policies and initiatives that affect Aboriginal people and their rights, by building effective relationships with Aboriginal communities, industry and governments* [2]

Having lead responsibility for FNEPI is one way that the Ministry is working toward achieving its vision and mission.

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[1] Changed from "Small Business Development" in the First Annual Results 06/07 to reflect the expanded range of programs and services being delivered.
[2] Aboriginal Relations Business Plan 2009-2012.

Leaders from First Nations in Alberta and from various industry sectors, have identified increased First Nations economic participation as a high priority. First Nations are looking for opportunities to benefit from the strong Alberta economy. At the same time, industry is increasingly committed to partnerships and the transfer of management skills through business relationships. FNEPI brings First Nations, industry and other stakeholders together to take advantage of economic opportunities and to increase the participation of First Nations in the Alberta economy.

How FNEPI Programs are Delivered

Two provincial ministries administer FNEPI initiatives and work with First Nations, First Nation organizations and their partners on specific economic participation projects.

- **Alberta Aboriginal Relations (AR),** as the lead ministry, supports partnership development through the Strategic Economic Initiatives (SEI) program. The Ministry also supports economic capacity building through the Regional Partnerships Development (RPD) and the Economic Capacity Building (ECB) programs.
- **Alberta Employment and Immigration (E&I)** works in partnership with the Federal Government and Aboriginal communities to support Aboriginal entrepreneurship development and labour force development. In addition to its entrepreneurship development and support initiatives delivered under FNEPI, the Ministry also develops and supports labour market programs designed for Aboriginal Albertans. It creates partnerships with First Nations on- and off-reserve, Métis and Inuit to increase Aboriginal labour force participation.

Aboriginal Relations
Employment and Immigration
FNEPI First Nations Economic Partnerships Initiative
Strategic Economic Initiatives (SEI)
Regional Partnerships Development (RPD)
Economic Capacity Building (ECB)
First Nations Business Support
Regional Economic Development Alliance
Business Sector Advisory Services
First Nation Labour Force Planning Program

The various FNEPI programs and initiatives complement one another to provide co-ordinated support for enhanced First Nations economic self-reliance. Each funding program under FNEPI has its own eligibility criteria.

FNEPI Two-Year Program Review

At the launch of FNEPI in 2005, it was mandated that the initiative would be reviewed in the third year of implementation, with adjustments made to programming as required. In the fall of 2007, the FNEPI Two-Year Consolidated Review was completed. First Nation communities and industry representatives participated in the review process. The Review analyzed and integrated stakeholder feedback and evaluative information collected by Alberta Aboriginal Relations and Alberta Employment and Immigration on the first two years of FNEPI operations, from Nov 1, 2005 to March 31, 2007.

The review explored issues related to program purpose and parameters, funding, program awareness, coordination of services and building stronger relationships and trust with First Nation communities. Eight recommendations that respond to these issues were identified in the review. Five of these recommendations relate directly to FNEPI and three relate to issues where FNEPI has influence but does not have decision-making authority. These recommendations are:

Recommendations Directly Related to FNEPI:

1. Develop a long-term vision and expected results statement for FNEPI. Clearly communicate this statement of vision and results to all stakeholders and develop the needed measures to assess FNEPI's impact over time.
2. Identify and review options for involving First Nations in FNEPI program design and determine the most appropriate method for this involvement.
3. Continue to adapt and refine FNEPI as needed. Clearly communicate to stakeholders how their feedback has been addressed.
4. Develop strategies for strengthening and building relationships with First Nations communities and organizations.
5. Identify and review the options available for better co-ordinating FNEPI's program delivery. Continue to develop links with other provincial government programs and services that support First Nations economic development.

Recommendations Indirectly Related to FNEPI:

6. Inform key decision makers in AR and E&I of the larger policy questions that stakeholders identified in the FNEPI review process.
7. AR and E&I continue their efforts to encourage and support First Nations/industry partnerships and consider stakeholder suggestions for how FNEPI and other government action can support these relationships.

8. Ensure AR and E&I staff members have the knowledge and awareness they need to effectively deliver programs and services to First Nations communities.

A cross-ministry team has been established to review and respond to these recommendations. Since the review was released in early 2008, significant standardization of administrative processes has occurred, with the goal of reducing administrative burdens on clients so they can focus their energy and efforts on achieving results. A review of the Regional Partnerships Development (RPD) program is underway and options for increasing First Nations involvement in FNEPI program design are being identified. These actions are concrete examples of the responses of both ministries to the FNEPI review recommendations.

Investing in the Future

FNEPI promotes more effective co-operation among First Nation communities and organizations, industry, governments and other partners. It is aligned with Alberta's vision as outlined in the *Aboriginal Policy Framework:*

"...a future in which strong, sustainable Aboriginal economies support self-reliant First Nations, Métis and other Aboriginal communities and people. Capacity building and economic development are the keys to unlocking this future..."[4]

The Government of Alberta launched FNEPI in the fall of 2005. Funds to support FNEPI are included in the budgets for the Ministry of Aboriginal Relations and the Ministry of Employment and Immigration.

Ministry	*FNEPI Budget 2007 / 08*	*FNEPI Budget 2008 / 09*
Alberta Aboriginal Relations	**$ 4.69 M**	**$ 4.77 M**
Alberta Employment and Immigration	**$ 3.4 M**	**$ 3.4 M***

*It is anticipated that actual expenditures will be higher due to collaboration with other E&I programs and services.

Between Nov. 1, 2005 and March 31, 2008, FNEPI funded 109 partnership and capacity building projects involving 31 First Nations in Alberta, nine Tribal Councils/ Regional organizations and 11 other stakeholder organizations.

[4] Strengthening Relationships. The Government of Alberta's Aboriginal Policy Framework. Government of Alberta. September 2000 (p. 7).

During the 2007-08 fiscal year, FNEPI funded 53 partnership and capacity-building projects involving 20 First Nations in Alberta, eight Tribal Councils/Regional organizations and 13 other stakeholder organizations. FNEPI also provided funding to 93 entrepreneurship and support projects managed by Alberta Employment and Immigration's Aboriginal Development Branch.

Highlights of FNEPI Activities for 2007-08

Partnership Development

Partnerships are critical to enhancing First Nations participation in the Alberta economy. The **Strategic Economic Initiatives (SEI)** program provides funding to support strategic, sustainable partnerships between First Nations, industry and other partners. The primary goal of SEI is to create sustainable partnerships that result in tangible benefits for First Nations. Many SEI projects have a regional focus and all have a partner. Each project:

- Addresses community priorities.
- Demonstrates significant strategic value.
- Contributes to current understanding of First Nation economic development.

Partnership Results

With support from the SEI program, First Nations in Alberta have initiated strategic partnerships between themselves, with public sector partners and with a wide range of industry partners. Partnerships have been developed in a number of economic sectors including oil and gas, forestry, agriculture, information and communications technology and energy production. Economic outcomes for First Nations have included the supply of goods and services, land and resource development, tourism development and opportunities for participation in the knowledge economy.

FNEPI Partnership Projects from November 2005 to March 2008

Number of Projects	2005-06	2006-07	2007-08
New Strategic Economic Initiatives	10	16	14

Since 2005, the SEI program has supported a total of 40 strategic partnerships involving 26 First Nations in Alberta, three Regional/Tribal Councils and one stakeholder organization. Examples of some of the outcomes achieved in 2007-08 through these projects include:

- Development of a strategic business development plan for the creation of an economic development corporation by the Athabasca Tribal Council.
- Development of a strategy which will lead to an irrigation project involving 1,670 hectares of Piikani land.
- Conclusion of an agreement between Wesley Oil and Gas Inc. and Space City Energy Marketing related to petroleum and natural gas production.

Partnership Success Stories

A complete listing of the SEI projects for the 2007-08 fiscal year can be found in the companion document entitled *Listing of FNEPI Grants for the 2007-08 Fiscal Year*. This document is available online on the Aboriginal Relations website at www.aboriginal.alberta.ca. Three partnership success stories are highlighted below to provide a fuller sense of the nature of SEI projects and the results that are being achieved.

Enoch Cree Nation: River Cree Development Corporation

The goal of Enoch Cree Nation is to address issues of poverty and the need for long-term employment on reserve. The leadership of the First Nation is committed to a strategy of "providing for ourselves" and established the River Cree Development Corporation (RCDC) in 2006 to take advantage of economic opportunities available to the First Nation.

With the support of the **Strategic Economic Initiatives** program, RCDC will build on the success of the River Cree Casino and Resort. The goal is to achieve greater industrial and commercial development on reserve lands while respecting traditional Cree culture and the community's well-being. SEI funds are assisting RCDC to establish a firm foundation for future commercial land development by supporting the development of a tax/bylaw system to retain quality businesses and to develop strategies for attracting business and establishing commercial development partnerships.

The project will help to increase Aboriginal employment as well as business income for the Enoch Cree Nation. This will lead to greater financial independence for the First Nation and its members. Additional positive outcomes consist not just of direct

economic benefits, but of socio-economic benefits such as a higher standard of living, positive role modeling and pride though employment. These benefits could lead to cultural retention and healthier lifestyle choices, resulting in a healthier community overall.

"With the planned development of commercial initiatives, the Enoch Cree Nation is building for the future by creating an economy for generations to come. The SEI funding is providing the ECN with a 'hand-up' rather than a 'hand-out' with this planned development by providing the financial wherewithal to complete the necessary due diligence and ensuring a higher probability of success.

This funding is an essential part of this multi-million dollar process which will lead to a multi-million dollar development. By retaining the qualified professionals and conducting the necessary 'homework', the ECN could create the much needed self-sustaining economy for the community."

Don Morin, Senior Manager – *Economic Development, Enoch Cree Nation.*

Treaty 7 Management Corporation: Development of a Strategic Tourism Plan

Treaty 7 Management Corporation comprises the First Nation communities within southern Alberta and includes the Tsuu T'ina, Siksika, Blood, Piikani and Stoney (Bearspaw, Chiniki and Wesley) First Nations. The area has many historical sites including culturally significant places such as Head-Smashed-In Buffalo Jump and the Blackfoot Crossing Historical Park. Head-Smashed-In Buffalo Jump is a UNESCO World Heritage Site while Blackfoot Crossing includes a $25 million, 62,000 square foot museum that allows visitors to experience Blackfoot heritage via a cultural exhibition, traditional dance and a tipi village.

Treaty 7 Management Corporation partnered with the **Strategic Economic Initiatives** program and with Indian and Northern Affairs Canada (INAC) to engage Treaty 7 First Nations in the development of a strategic tourism plan. The project involves the identification of tourism opportunities, current product offerings and partnership opportunities. As well, the plan incorporates an effective monitoring and evaluation framework that will enable the communities to adjust the plan as required on an ongoing basis.

Alberta Employment & Immigration also supported this project through its **Small Business Support Initiative**. Treaty 7 Management Corporation delivered a series of tourism development workshops to its member First Nations. As a result, each of the Treaty 7 First Nation communities will have developed a local tourism strategy that fits into the larger Strategic Tourism Plan for the Treaty 7 area. This plan will, in turn, support broader tourism strategies developed by Travel Alberta.

"Treaty 7 Management Corporation would like to thank the Alberta government for their support of promoting Treaty 7 First Nation tourism opportunities from the SEI program."

Wayne Sugai, *Treaty 7 Management Corporation*

Loon River First Nation: E-Readiness Assessment

The **Strategic Economic Initiatives** program helped Loon River First Nation partner with IBM and Function Four Ltd. to produce a detailed Community E-Readiness Assessment. The assessment identified the use of information and communications technology (ICT) skills and infrastructure by the community. The result was an E-Index specific to the community. In addition to creating the E-Index, the project assessed the readiness of the First Nation and its members to participate in the knowledge economy.

The project is one initiative of a Government of Alberta partnership formed in June 2007 with IBM and several First Nation and Métis communities and organizations. The results of the Loon River project will be combined with the results of projects in other communities involved in the partnership to create a pool of community-specific data and a decision-making framework that will allow detailed comparisons between communities. This information will empower Aboriginal communities to collaborate regionally to acquire ICT skills and infrastructure to enable them to participate in the broader economy. Additionally, this project provides an opportunity for relatively isolated communities such as the Loon River First Nation to connect to educational and technical resources to broaden the community's capacity to communicate with other First Nations, governments and industry.

The project is unique, since the assessment tools are built on a participative community economic development approach that enables the tools to be tailored to the specific needs and vision of each community. A community coordinator was designated as the central contact within the community and all members of the First Nation were able to contribute to development of Loon River's E-Index.

Other First Nation communities benefiting from this partnership with IBM are the Fort McKay First Nation, the Enoch Cree Nation and Treaty 7 Management Corporation, which represents the Tsuu T'ina, Siksika, Blood, Piikani and Stoney (Bearspaw, Chiniki and Wesley) First Nations.

"Loon River First Nation's mandate is to provide a better education system for our membership as a whole. The partnership with IBM and Function Four Ltd. brings the tools and technology that are needed in order to accomplish this goal. This will also help us to reach out and communicate with other First Nations, governments and industry."

Anne Auger, *Loon River First Nation*

Recognizing Industry Commitment

In 2003, the then Ministry of Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development created the ***Rewarding Partnerships*** program. This is an industry recognition initiative and a partnership between the Ministry of Aboriginal Relations and the Alberta Chamber of Resources.

The program recognizes and celebrates companies and their Aboriginal business partners. Its long-term goal is to build relationships and enhance the capacity of Aboriginal businesses and communities. The Alberta Chamber of Resources presents these awards at its annual awards banquet.

The winner of the 2008 award was Imperial Oil Resources Ltd. for its Native Internship Program. The program, initiated in partnership with the Aboriginal communities of Cold Lake First Nations, Saddle Lake Cree Nation, the Kikino and Elizabeth Métis Settlements and the Métis Nation of Alberta, provides Aboriginal participants with 24 months of paid on - the - job training, a comprehensive training program and an internship in field or plant operations. Imperial Oil has hired all of the graduates and the program has contributed to the growth in Aboriginal representation at the company - from 2.8 per cent in 1998 to just over 11 per cent in 2007.

From left to right: Pamela McNeil, graduate of Imperial Oil's Native Internship Program, Dave Willis, production manager at Imperial Oil, and Rick Janvier, Cold Lake First Nations program partner, accept the Rewarding Partnership Award from the Alberta Chamber of Resources in recognition of the program's success.

Capacity Building

Capacity building assists an individual, community or business entity to fully integrate into Alberta's economy. FNEPI capacity-building programs support the transfer of knowledge, skills and organizational systems needed to enhance economic participation and self-reliance. These programs focus on strengthening the ability of First Nations and associated organizations to identify, plan and implement economic participation initiatives.

FNEPI capacity building programs include:

- **Regional Partnerships Development (RPD)**: The RPD program supports unaffiliated First Nations and regional/tribal organizations to employ Regional Economic Partnership Co-ordinators (REPCs) to enhance economic participation. REPCs work directly with First Nations and Tribal Councils to identify and develop strategic economic partnership opportunities with industry, government and other potential partners. The program also provides support for a network that provides the REPCs with training opportunities, information on available funding sources and a forum for sharing information and experiences.

- **Economic Capacity Building (ECB)**: The ECB program supports rural and urban First Nations and Aboriginal organizations to undertake specific projects aimed at developing skills and knowledge to enhance economic participation and self-reliance. Projects supported by the ECB program focus on enhancing the ability to identify, plan and implement economic development projects.

- **Labour Force Planning**. The Labour Force Planning initiative provides targeted resources to First Nations and regional/tribal organizations to assist them with strategic human resource planning related to work force development. Eligible activities include: development of labour force planning tools and resources, identification of local and regional opportunities for economic participation, assessment of community readiness to participate in the economy and the development of organizational structures and processes to improve case management and client services.

Capacity Building Results

Since 2005, FNEPI has supported 55 capacity building projects and the hiring of 15 Regional Economic Partnership Co-ordinators. Eighteen First Nations in Alberta, 10 Tribal Councils and Regional organizations and 12 other stakeholder organizations have been involved in these activities.

FNEPI Capacity Building Projects from Nov. 1, 2005 to March 31, 2008

Co-ordinators/Projects	*2005 - 06*	*2006 - 07*	*2007 - 08*
Regional Partnerships Development	11 Regional Economic Partnership Coordinators	13 Regional Economic Partnership Coordinators	15 Regional Economic Partnership Coordinators
Economic Capacity Building	5 Projects	10 Projects	10 Projects
Labour Force Planning	6 Projects	10 Projects	14 Projects

The Regional Economic Partnership Co-ordinators (REPCs) funded through the **Regional Partnerships Development** program provide a foundation of skills and knowledge to support a wide range of capacity-building and economic development initiatives. Six of the 15 REPC projects are already showing good results with entrepreneurship or economic development at the community level.

Examples of the outcomes achieved by the program in 2007-08 include:

- Support and learning opportunities provided to Community Economic Development Officers.
- Assistance to access funding for individual and First Nation-owned businesses
- Support for the development of partnerships and business plans.

In 2007-08, the **Economic Capacity Building** program funded projects to improve governance, to support organizational development, to assist in community planning and information gathering and to develop training materials and create learning opportunities supporting Aboriginal economic development.

Examples of project outcomes include:

- Production of a tourism marketing DVD by the Alexander First Nation.
- Development of a community plan by the Paul First Nation that resulted in seven industry partnerships and 41 employment placements.
- Support for *Circle Alberta: A Dialogue on Alberta Futures - Strengthening Relationships For Shared Prosperity* organized by the John Humphrey Centre for Peace and Human Rights.

The **Labour Force Planning** initiative supported several labour force planning projects in the 2007-08 fiscal year. Examples of outcomes are the development of labour force plans by Lesser Slave Lake Indian Regional Council, Bigstone Cree Nation, Samson Oil and Gas Inc., and Paul First Nation.

Capacity Building Success Stories

A full listing of capacity-building projects for the 2007-08 fiscal year can be found in the companion document entitled *Listing of FNEPI Grants for the 2007-08 Fiscal Year*. The document is available online at the Aboriginal Relations website at www.aboriginal.alberta.ca.

Four success stories are highlighted below to illustrate the nature of FNEPI's capacity-building projects and the results that are being achieved.

Lesser Slave Lake Indian Regional Council: Expanding Economic Development Opportunities

With the support of the **Regional Partnerships Development** (RPD) program, the Lesser Slave Lake Indian Regional Council acquired the knowledge and skills needed to successfully implement the business plan developed for its economic development arm, Lesser Slave Lake Management Services Ltd. (LSLMSL).

The Regional Economic Partnership Co-ordinator hired under the RPD program is working with the chief executive officer of LSLMSL to expand economic development opportunities through partnership development. LSLMSL currently has 21 employees. Over the past two years, it has achieved $3.4 million in annual revenues and acquired $3.6 million in fixed assets and machinery.

A successful training and career program specifically designed for First Nations has been initiated. First Nation individuals are receiving training as crew slashers, crew leaders, heavy equipment operators, project managers and other occupations. In addition, LSLMSL has just entered the Internet service-provider field, serving four First Nations and surrounding communities.

"Our innovative approach in meeting the requirements of the REPC position with its required skill sets cannot be achieved by an individual. It requires a team effort to be successful. We contracted LSLMSL so its various professionals can support the REPC program. We have learned that the REPC program has to be a collaborative effort rather than an individual position."

Allen Willier, *Chief Executive Advisor, LSLIRC*

Sunchild E-Learning: Trades-Specific Training

The Sunchild E-Learning Community is a successful online distance learning organization. Partnerships have been established with 23 First Nations in Alberta. Business corporations are supportive and are providing financial support.

The primary focus of the Sunchild E-Learning Community has been on high school learning. With the support of the **Economic Capacity Building** program, Sunchild has expanded this focus to include trades-related training. It has recently developed an online pre-mechanics course and an online exam. First Nations students from across the province can access these courses. In addition, Sunchild E-Learning Community completed a business case that looked at the viability of offering other online trade-specific training. Based on the results, Sunchild plans to develop additional online trade-specific courses.

"Sunchild E-Learning continues to grow and expand with the support of the Alberta government. Students from Cardston, Alberta to Paulatuk in the Northwest Territories benefit from the support of ECB in course development and course delivery. Education equates to economic capacity building and, dollar for dollar, investment in the Sunchild program is an outstanding bang for your buck."

***Martin Sacher**, Head, Sunchild E-Learning Community*

Smith's Landing : Governance and Investment for Economic Success

On Jan. 28, 2000, the federal government made a formal announcement recognizing the newest First Nation in Alberta – Smith's Landing First Nation. Smith's Landing First Nation and the federal government signed a land settlement agreement that addressed a long-standing obligation to the First Nation under the terms of Treaty 8 signed in 1899. The agreement provided a one-time cash payment along with land contained in Wood Buffalo National Park.

A June 2007 election at Smith's Landing resulted in a new Chief and council. To ensure the future prosperity of the First Nation and to continue with the good work of the past administration, the new council felt it was important to have a full understanding of the Treaty Land Entitlement and its parameters.

With the support of the **Economic Capacity Building** program, the First Nation's new Chief and council gained valuable insight into good governance concepts and the importance and potential of investing entitlement funds for future generations. They visited other First Nations that had been successful in developing partnerships and business opportunities, undertook a labour pool analysis and developed a plan to establish a business entity separate from political influence. They have also developed a plan to ensure that the Band membership is fully informed of the Treaty Land Entitlement agreement and the plans for the community.

By following a structured process, Smith's Landing First Nation has taken the initiative to ensure that the community will be fully involved in economic opportunities within the region and will move towards economic self-reliance.

"The Smith's Landing First Nation has experienced substantial benefits in accessing the Economic Capacity Building Program under the First Nations Economic Partnerships Initiative. The program allowed the First Nation to obtain the capacity assistance required to review the existing Trust Agreement and plan for future investment opportunities that will result in industry partnerships and training and employment for our members.

Overall, the program has assisted Smith's Landing with our mission statement: Together, we will continue our journey in harmony with the environment to sustain a healthy and self-sufficient lifestyle for future generations."

Chief Fred Daniels, *Smith's Landing First Nation*

O' Chiese First Nation: Labour Force Planning

Labour force planning assists First Nation communities with the development and implementation of initiatives that support their participation in Alberta's labour force, including employment information, planning, strategies and identification of employment training needs.

With funding provided by the **Labour Force Planning** Initiative, the O'Chiese First Nation Labour Force Planning project focused on developing the capacity of its membership. It created a community skills inventory outlining present capacity, an employable skills development database and tools for labour force planning. This work will assist the O'Chiese First Nation to develop and deliver future training opportunities in a planned and organized way.

"Through the Labour Force Planning Initiative, the O'Chiese First Nation developed a survey to analyze and record an inventory of skills, education and talents of our membership. By collecting this information, we can assess the areas we require to improve our Nation's capacity. Furthermore, through this survey, our membership was able to share their goals and ambitions and we welcomed their suggestions and opinions.

O'Chiese First Nation has a greater chance of gaining the tools needed to increase our capacity and this will bring us closer to assessing the potential skills and capabilities of our Nation's membership, thus gaining insight on the training requirements needed to build our capacity."

Tania Daychief, *Senior Project Manager, O'Chiese First Nation*

Entrepreneurship Development and Support

FNEPI's Entrepreneurship Development & Support Initiatives are administered by Alberta Employment & Immigration (E&I). E&I, through its Aboriginal Development branch, fosters and supports entrepreneurship and the development of related skills to create innovative and sustainable Aboriginal businesses and communities.

FNEPI's Entrepreneurship Development & Support Initiatives include:

- Providing funding to Aboriginal communities to increase the participation of First Nations people in Alberta's labour force. This includes developing partnerships and supporting employment and training programs designed for First Nations on- and off-reserve, Métis and Inuit.

- Providing entrepreneurial training, pre- and after-care for entrepreneurs and access to business advisory services, including counselling, planning, training and mentoring.

- Providing business management and small business start-up training to individual Aboriginal entrepreneurs or to First Nation-owned businesses.

- Providing support for initiatives that focus on developing the entrepreneurship skills of Aboriginal women and youth through training and mentorship.

- Funding Alberta's Aboriginal Capital Corporations to provide one-on-one pre- and after-care to Aboriginal entrepreneurs looking to start a new business or expand an existing one.

- Facilitating economic development within Aboriginal communities through advisory services, opportunity identification, feasibility assessments, business plan development and the sharing of best practices.

Entrepreneurship Development and Support Results

Entrepreneurship development and support initiatives are focused, for the most part on providing Aboriginal entrepreneurs with increased access to business information and advisory services. The main objective of these activities is the transfer of business knowledge and skills to Aboriginal entrepreneurs. In 2007-08, E&I's Aboriginal Development Branch managed 93 grants and contracts to support Aboriginal entrepreneurs.

Specific projects include:

- Extending existing business information and advisory services to First Nations and other Aboriginal organizations and entrepreneurs.
- Customizing and/or expanding business development resources for Aboriginal people.

Examples of the outcomes achieved through FNEPI's entrepreneurship development and support initiatives include:

- Development of an Aboriginal Entrepreneurs DVD by the Alberta Indian Investment Corporation.
- Business start-up support provided to Aboriginal women entrepreneurs.
- Provision of business plan development assistance to the Paul First Nation.
- Provision of business and strategic planning assistance to the Siksika First Nation.
- Support for the Alberta First Nations Economic Developers Network Association.
- Support for Athabasca Tribal Council's Aboriginal youth entrepreneur camp.
- Project management training provided to the Dene Tha First Nation.
- An economic development and Aboriginal collaboration project involving the Northeast Alberta Information Hub Ltd.

In 2007-08, the **Aboriginal Entrepreneurial Training** (AET) program was delivered in Edmonton, Calgary, Samson Cree Nation, Blood Tribe, Piikani, Siksika, St. Paul, Fort McMurray and Tsuu T'ina. A total of 3,124 training hours was delivered and 83 clients completed the program.

Alberta Employment & Immigration is now in the third year of funding a series of contracts with Alberta-based Aboriginal Capital Corporations. The following table provides information on services delivered under the contracts.

Aboriginal Capital Corporation	*Service Provided*
Alberta Indian Investment Corporation	Business start-up support services for existing and prospective clients, market development initiatives, business workshops and youth entrepreneurship.
Apeetogosan (Métis) Development Inc.	Business start-up support services to clients and direct business plan development to facilitate financing for business start-up.
Settlement Investment Corporation	A series of workshops in business management. Intensive one-on-one training in business skills such as accounting.
Indian Business Corporation	Workshops in business management and knowledge development.

The success of this initiative is primarily due to the networks and relationships that Alberta's Aboriginal Capital Corporations have with Aboriginal entrepreneurs. Alberta Employment & Immigration has used the respective networks of these service providers to expand the delivery of business start-up support services provided to Aboriginal-owned businesses in the province. Clients benefit from immediate support offered by well-established service providers.

In 2007-08, 194 Aboriginal-owned businesses and entrepreneurs throughout the province and across many industries were served. At least 39 new businesses were established.

Entrepreneurship Development & Support Success Stories

A complete listing of E&I's Entrepreneurship Development and Support activity for the 2007-08 fiscal year can be found in the companion document entitled *Listing of FNEPI Grants for the 2007-08 Fiscal Year*. The document is available online at the Aboriginal Relations website at www.aboriginal.alberta.ca. Three success stories are highlighted below on entrepreneurship development, the support provided under FNEPI and the results being achieved.

Aboriginal Entrepreneurial Training (AET): Developing Small Business Skills

Audrey Weasel Traveller is the owner of Blue Mountains Gas and Grocery Store and a participant in the **Aboriginal Entrepreneurial Training** program in 2007. Audrey currently has two full-time staff, one part-time accountant and one administrative assistant. She is using the information provided to her by AET facilitators to ensure her business continues to thrive.

Robert Breaker is the owner of Breaker Consulting, a company based at the Siksika First Nation. While Robert had a considerable amount of consulting and business experience before starting his company, the AET program provided him with valuable new skills and updated information. Robert appreciated the flexible and customized nature of the AET program, including the evening classes and the condensed schedule.

Small Business Supports: Community Futures Treaty Seven 10th Annual First Nations Entrepreneurial Youth Camp 2008

Through FNEPI, E&I supports youth entrepreneurship development through projects such as Community Futures Treaty 7's Entrepreneurial Youth Camp 2008. This project supported 30 First Nations young people, ranging in age from 16 to 35, to become self-sustaining by utilizing their talents to explore their own business ventures. The project gave First Nations youth the opportunity to begin the journey to starting their own small business.

The camp is designed to foster and promote a developmental environment capable of supporting aspiring young First Nation entrepreneurs. It encompasses all aspects of business development and employment possibilities, from conceptual to implementation stages. A key objective of this camp is to develop confidence, spirit and knowledge in Aboriginal youth.

This project gave First Nations youth hands-on experience developing a business plan, determining the amount of financing needed for business start-up, pricing their product/service, researching the industry, marketing their product and operating a small business. The participants received the benefit of advice, feedback and expertise in the areas of banking, law and financial planning, from business consultants, current successful entrepreneurs and from alumni participants who are now entrepreneurs. Over the past 10 years, this camp has successfully trained over 285 First Nations youth.

"Community Futures Treaty 7 is dedicated to building the economies of the First Nations of Treaty 7 through entrepreneurship capacity development. Our ability to achieve results is enhanced through the support of the Alberta government. Through the support of this program, CFT7 assisted in nine business start-ups with anticipated revenues of over $1 million dollars and the creation of 16 jobs."

Hank Shade, *General Manager, Treaty Seven Economic Development Corporation.*

Settlement Investment Corporation: Pre-Loan and After-care Counselling

The Settlement Investment Corporation (SIC) received funding under the **Small Business Support** initiative to provide pre- and after-care to Aboriginal entrepreneurs. As a result, SIC provided 21 Aboriginal entrepreneurs with customized pre-loan and after-care counselling and delivered four workshops to Aboriginal entrepreneurs. These activities support entrepreneurs to plan carefully and face entrepreneurship challenges head on.

"The financial support provided to Settlement Investment Corporation by the Alberta Government has enabled us, for the first time in our 23 year history, to provide pre-loan and after-care counselling. This has improved the quality of our new loan applications and provided hands-on training to our exiting clients. This will certainly increase the number of business successes which will help us maintain the long term viability of our company."

Wayne Gray, *Settlement Investment Corporation*

Recognizing The Achievement of Aboriginal Women Entrepreneurs

The ***Aboriginal Women Entrepreneur Award of Distinction*** recognizes outstanding achievement by an Aboriginal woman entrepreneur who exemplifies effective leadership, innovation and a commitment to enhancing the well-being of the larger Aboriginal community. The award is funded by the Ministry of Aboriginal Relations and awarded annually by the Alberta Chambers of Commerce at its Alberta Business Awards of Distinction event.

The 2008 award winner was Karen Young, a member of the Cold Lake First Nation and owner/operator of KB Jodan Inc. Her company, based on the First Nation with a satellite office in Lac La Biche, provides safety training, industrial medical services and emergency medical mobile services.

The company has grown from a single employee in 2004 to 16 full time employees – 90 per cent of whom are Aboriginal – and 11 casual employees in 2007. In an October 2007 article in the Lac La Biche *Post*, Ms. Young attributed the company's growth to "professional, fully trained staff and (an) ongoing commitment to customer satisfaction through a commitment to integrity, dependability and fair play." Ms. Young started the business with a modest amount of her own funds. Although she was familiar with the service that she was providing due to her own medical background, business management was a challenge to her. Taking active steps to understand the business and to become budget conscious, Ms. Young now plays a direct role in the planning, establishment and ongoing operation of the business.

Center: Karen Young (award winner). Left: Brian Young (Karen's husband). Right: Donavon Young (no relation) ADM, Alberta Aboriginal Relations.

First Nations in Alberta are working together with all levels of government, with industry and with other partners to enhance their participation in the provincial economy. This is leading to increased self-reliance and well-being. Promising practices continue to be identified and built upon.

Partnerships

- **Strategic Partnerships Work**: Partnerships enable First Nation economic opportunities to be pursued. Partnerships are driven by business opportunities that build upon a First Nation's assets and industry's knowledge of supply and demand for products or services. Strategic partnerships leverage a First Nation's assets to form profitable businesses. The result is long-term sustainable economic development that benefits all parties.

- **Setting Expectations:** Written terms of reference, memorandums of understanding and partnership agreements can help the project partners to agree on their objectives, set expectations for their partnership and develop business and strategic plans.

- **Regional Scale:** Regional alliances can contribute to the success of strategic partnerships. Successful partnerships have included a number of companies in the same economic sector, several companies in different sectors and increasingly, local governments.

- **In-Kind Partnership Contributions:** Contributions made to FNEPI partnerships can also be "in-kind". For example, one industry partner contributed the secondment of a dedicated staff person to support the First Nation. Another project included travel and accommodation costs contributed by First Nation community partners.

Capacity Building

- **Capacity Building Requires a Long-Term Commitment:** Development of knowledge, skill and ability takes time. Economic capacity building in First Nation communities requires sustained and long-term support and effort.

- **Capacity Building Links and Connects a Wide Range of Issues:** Capacity building efforts need to be tailored for the community. It is important to take a holistic and or community-driven approach and see the interconnections between issues and opportunities.

- **Learning from Others**: One of the most powerful ways to learn is from the experience, efforts and results of other First Nation communities.

- **Dedicated Human Resources:** Dedicated staff resources are needed in order for First Nations organizations to successfully advance economic participation projects.

- **Streamlined and Simplified Administrative Requirements:** Administrative requirements should support the effective and efficient delivery of programs and services. Simplifying these requirements increases compliance and ensures that program resources and efforts are focused on achieving results.

Entrepreneurship Development & Support

- **Knowledge Transfer from Aboriginal Entrepreneurs:** Word-of-mouth sharing of lessons learned is a good way to transfer business development advice to aspiring entrepreneurs.

- **Confidence Building**: Building confidence is a key factor in the success of Aboriginal people in business.

FNEPI-funded projects are providing an understanding of how to improve and enhance partnerships, economic capacity and small business development. The factors that contribute to success are being more clearly understood and shared among First Nation communities and industry.

Each year this knowledge is shared through this document and other mechanisms. However, more needs to be done to communicate and build upon this knowledge. To ensure that the success and learning of FNEPI is shared, Alberta Aboriginal Relations will host the ***Gathering for Success: Sharing Indigenous Economic Development Practices Symposium***, June 28-30, 2009, in Banff, Alberta, Canada. The event will also increase awareness of Aboriginal economic development practices throughout the world.

Future Directions for FNEPI

Over the past three years, the First Nations Economic Partnerships Initiative has shown very favourable results. There is good reason to believe that FNEPI will continue to make a positive impact in the lives of First Nations people and communities in Alberta and will continue to be used as a model across Canada. First Nations organizations and individuals are forming partnerships, building capacity and learning about the broader and finer points of business practices and entrepreneurship. Individuals and organizations alike are interested in participating in FNEPI.

The following future directions will be pursued in order to advance FNEPI's three main objectives:

1. Partnerships:

- In order to support comprehensive community economic planning, all future community economic development plans funded by the Strategic Economic Initiatives program must include a detailed survey of the business partnerships available to the First Nation. As well, these plans will include a financial analysis of the performance of existing community-owned businesses. This will allow the community to make informed decisions regarding their strategic direction including whether further investments are appropriate.

2. Capacity Building

- The **Regional Partnerships Development program** is currently under review by Alberta Aboriginal Relations. Changes made to the program as a result of the review will ensure that RPD continues to be as effective and as efficient as possible.

- The **Economic Capacity Building program** will provide greater advisory and support services to communities applying for funding. The program will encourage and promote greater involvement in ECB projects by Aboriginal youth.

3. Entrepreneurship Development & Support

- E&I will continue to link and co-ordinate its entrepreneurship development and support activity with that ministry's other programs and services that support the economic participation of Aboriginal people in the provincial economy.

Quality of Life Award

In addition to FNEPI program refinements, the Ministry of Aboriginal Relations has created an annual ***Quality of Life Award*** that recognizes an organization for improving the quality of life within Aboriginal communities in Alberta.

Quality of Life refers to the degree of well-being experienced by an individual or group of people. Award criteria are based upon current research that identifies a set of quality of life indicators and relevant Aboriginal values. These indicators include:

- Employment
- Health
- Education
- Youth supports
- Housing
- Safe communities
- Cultural preservation
- Relationship-building supports

A five-member selection panel will judge nominations and select the winner of the $25,000 award. The first award will be be presented by the Minister at the Government of Alberta's National Aboriginal Day Celebrations in June 2009.

Based on FNEPI's results to date and future activities, the initiative will continue to make a positive impact in the lives of First Nation individuals and communities.

Quality of Life Award

Contact Information

FNEPI provides support to First Nation communities and organizations in Alberta through a number of specific programs. For further information on FNEPI and its programs and their eligibility criteria, please contact:

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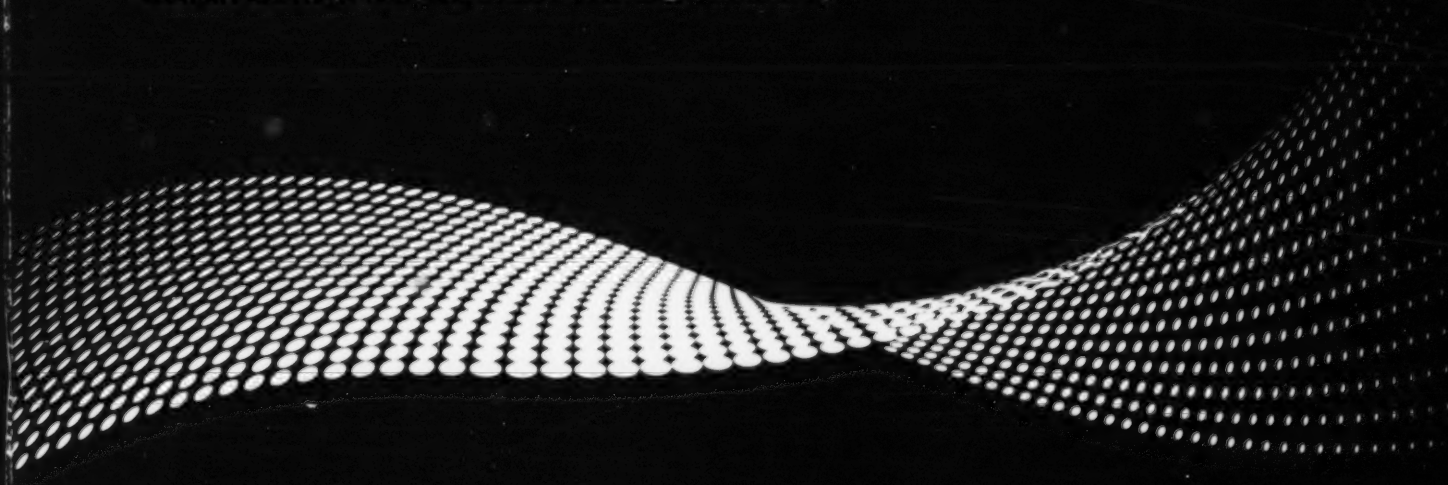
To call toll-free from anywhere in Alberta, dial 310-0000.
Information on FNEPI is also available on the Internet at:
www.aboriginal.alberta.ca

Sunchild E-Learning continues to grow and expand with the support of the Alberta Government.

Students from Cardston, Alberta to Paulatuk in the Northwest Territories benefit from the support of ECB

Martin Sacher, *Head, Sunchild E-Learning Community*



Through the Labour Force Planning Initiative, the O'Chiese First Nation developed a survey to analyze and record an inventory of skills, education, and talents of its membership.

O'Chiese First Nation has a greater chance of gaining the tools needed to increase our capacity and this will bring us closer to assessing the potential skills and capabilities of our Nation's membership

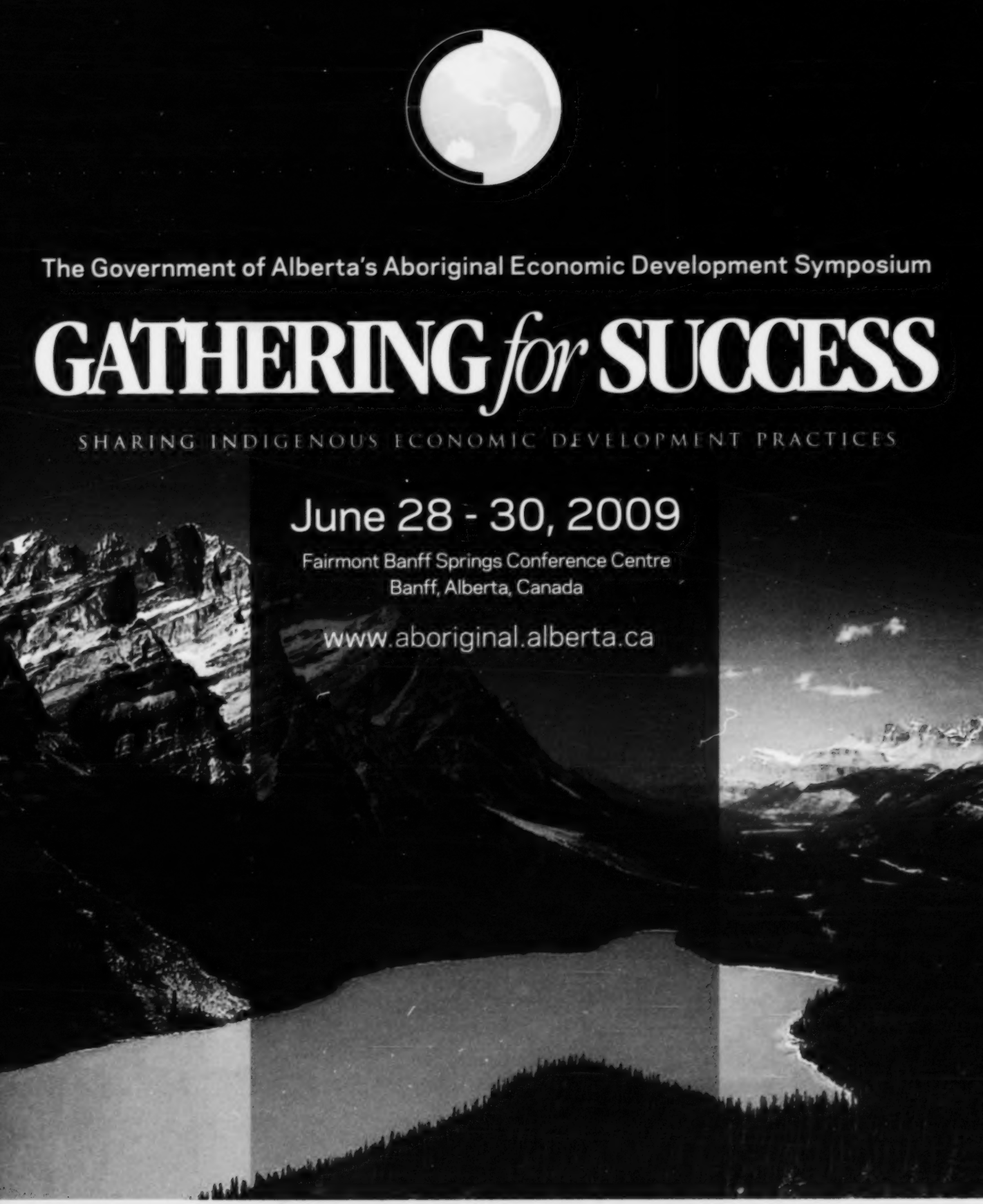
Tania Daychief, *Senior Project Manager, O'Chiese First Nation*

StrengtheningPartnerships **Building**Futures.

The Government of Alberta's Aboriginal Economic Development Symposium

GATHERING *for* SUCCESS

SHARING INDIGENOUS ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT PRACTICES



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